

Cats Test Positive for Tularemia

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Citizens to Keep Cats Indoors to Help Minimize Tularemia

Champaign, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) is encouraging area residents to keep cats indoors to reduce the likelihood of contracting tularemia. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District has identified two additional cats positive for tularemia in Champaign-Urbana. Previously, five cats were diagnosed with tularemia at the University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine; one cat from Champaign and one from Urbana; and three cats from two households in Savoy. Tularemia is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis* found in animals (especially rodents, rabbits and hares).

Cats may prey on rabbits and rodents and become infected or they may become infected through tick exposure. Cats may develop a variety of symptoms including high fever, mouth ulcers, depression, enlarged lymph nodes and behavioral changes including not eating. Persons whose cats have contact with the outdoors should take their pet into the veterinarian if they should develop these symptoms.

People may also contract tularemia developing sudden fever, chills, headaches, diarrhea, joint pain, muscle aches, cough and weakness. People can become infected by handling pets or wild animals with tularemia, being bitten by ticks or by inhaling the organism. If you develop symptoms of tularemia see your health care provider.

To reduce the chances that your cat will become infected:

- Do not allow your cat to hunt outdoors
- Consult with your veterinarian to make sure your cat is protected from tick bites
- Report any unexplained large die-offs of rodents or rabbits to your local animal control.
- To reduce the chance that you or your family members will become infected:
 - Wear tick protection when outdoors
 - Do not mow over sick or dead animals
 - Do not handle wild animals
 - Cook wild game meat thoroughly before eating and use gloves when handling the animal and preparing the meat for cooking
 - Take any pet with symptoms of tularemia to the veterinarian

If you have questions about tularemia in humans, please contact Rachella Thompson, Communicable Disease Investigator, with CUPHD at (217) 531-5361 or your health care provider. If you are a cat owner or have questions about tularemia in animals, please contact your veterinarian.

Visit <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/facts.asp> or http://www.avma.org/public_health/biosecurity/tularemia_facts.asp for additional information.

It is Time to Pay ISVMA Membership Dues

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1. When you click on the link, you will be asked to login to go to your account. If you have forgotten your username and/or password, click on the reminder link and the information will immediately be delivered to your email address.
2. Once you have logged in, you will see a link called "Member Renewal" in the floating orange box on the right hand side of your screen. Click on that link to pay your dues.

When you pay your dues, please notice that you can make an additional contribution to the Veterinary Medicine Political Action Committee (VMPAC). This PAC supports the lobbying activities of the ISVMA and, with the significant turnover in the legislature, we will need more PAC funds to help our members get to know their legislators better by attending fundraisers paid for by the PAC.

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ISVMA membership continues to grow and we set new membership records every year. We want all veterinarians and CVTs to join 3000 of their colleagues and become an ISVMA member today! Please encourage your colleagues to take a moment and fill out the [online membership application](#) and pay your dues with your VISA or MasterCard.

Do you know about ISVMA's tremendous success lobbying state government on your behalf? Have you seen the new Epitome magazine that is mailed to every DVM and CVT member? Have you participated in ISVMA's high quality, affordable and accessible CE programs? Has your practice saved money through one of our sponsored benefit programs?

Your support and participation are greatly appreciated. If you know a colleague or associate that is not a member of ISVMA, please encourage them to join also! Some of the benefits of membership are listed on the [ISVMA website](#).

About the Photo

The [Chipping Sparrow](#) (*Spizella passerina*) is a species of American sparrow. It is widespread, fairly tame, and common

across most of its North American range.

Throughout the year, adults are gray below and an orangish-rust color above. Adults in alternate (breeding) plumage have a persimmon-red cap, a nearly white supercilium, and a black trans-ocular line (running through the eye). Adults in basic (nonbreeding) plumage are less prominently marked, with a brownish cap, a dusky eyebrow, and a dark eye-line.

Juvenile Chipping Sparrows are prominently streaked below. Like nonbreeding adults, they show a dark eye-line, extending both in front of and behind the eye. The brownish cap and dusky eyebrow are variable but generally obscure in juveniles.

The song is a trill that varies considerably among birds within any particular region. Two broad classes of variation in the song of the Chipping Sparrow are the fast trill and the slow trill. Individual elements in the fast trill are run together about twice as fast as in the slow trill; the fast trill sounds like a buzz or like someone snoring, whereas the slow trill sounds like rapid finger-tapping.

In eastern North America, Chipping Sparrows breed in woodlands, farmlands, and suburban and urban districts. In western North America, the Chipping Sparrow prefers conifer forests for breeding. The Chipping Sparrow is partially migratory, with almost all mid-latitude and high-latitude breeders withdrawing in winter to the southern United States and Mexico. On the wintering grounds and during migration, Chipping Sparrows are gregarious, forming tight flocks with other Chipping Sparrows or loose assemblages with other species such as Eastern Bluebirds and Pine Warblers.

Throughout the year, Chipping Sparrows forage on the ground, often in loose flocks. Their diet consists mainly of seeds and crumbs of mostly any food, especially those fallen on the ground. Chipping Sparrows frequently forage directly from forbs and grasses, too. At any time of the year, especially, in spring, Chipping Sparrows may be seen in trees, even up in the canopy, where they forage on fresh buds and glean for arboreal arthropods.

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